



Rep. Steve Scalise (R-LA), RSC Chairman
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Repeal the Duplicative Catfish Inspection Program

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At a time when budgets are tight, wasteful spending on duplicative government programs should be eliminated. According to the GAO's past five reports on government waste and duplication, the USDA should not be responsible for catfish inspection. To avoid duplication and improve the effectiveness of the food safety system, the GAO recommends that Congress consider repealing this program. That is why **Rep. Hartzler (R-MO) has introduced H.R. 1313, legislation to repeal a duplicative USDA catfish inspection program.** Eliminating this program will save the U.S. taxpayer \$30 million in start-up costs and at least \$15 million annually.

Currently, the USDA has jurisdiction over meat, poultry and eggs while the FDA has jurisdiction over all other food, including seafood. The FDA regulates seafood through the successful seafood Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) program and good manufacturing practices (GMPs). However, the conference report to the 2008 Farm Bill (P.L. 110-246) added "catfish" to the USDA's jurisdiction without prior consideration by the House or Senate.

If implemented, this program would result in a duplicative regulatory regime requiring the USDA to inspect catfish and the FDA to inspect all other seafood. Every U.S. facility that processes catfish and any other seafood would be subject to regulation by both the USDA and the FDA. In addition to identifying the catfish inspection program as duplicative, GAO also reported to Congress that, by "splitting up seafood oversight and expending scarce resources," the catfish inspection program is at high risk for waste, fraud and abuse. Meanwhile, there is no sound rationale for the USDA assuming inspections. The USDA itself has concluded that its Food Safety Inspection Service would not provide additional food safety.

In addition, implementation of this program is expected to result in a trade war that would dramatically impact U.S. agriculture exports with our trading partners. Based on the determination that catfish is a low risk food and the program is not necessary for human health, this program would likely violate the WTO Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) agreement by requiring an unnecessary trade barrier to catfish imports. This would make U.S. agriculture exports, such as beef, soybeans, poultry, and pork, vulnerable to WTO-sanctioned trade retaliation.

This bill eliminates yet another wasteful and duplicative federal program with the potential to negatively impact the U.S. economy. This legislation is similar to H.R. 4296 from the 112th Congress.

To cosponsor H.R. 1313 or for additional information, please contact Joe Tvrdy in Rep. Hartzler's office at joe.tvrdy@mail.house.gov or (202) 225-2876.

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